

A NEW SPECIES OF SKINK OF *LERISTA* FROM QUEENSLAND AND A
RE-APPRAISAL OF *L. ALLANAE* (LONGMAN).

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L. colliveri sp.nov. is found in NE and Central Queensland. It has been confused with *L. allanae* (Longman) but, besides the strikingly different colour-pattern, it can be readily distinguished by the presence of a nubbin for a foreleg whereas *L. allanae* has no forelegs. With *L. colliveri* separated from *L. allanae*, the range of the latter species is even more restricted than thought. This rare species has only been found between Clermont and Capella, Central Queensland, within the area 22°50'-23°06' S and 147°38'-147°54' E. It apparently has not been met with since 1960. □ Scincidae, *Lerista allanae*, *Lerista colliveri*, new species, Queensland.

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The status of *Lerista* was clarified by Greer (1967, 1986). Since 1972, the species of the genus have received much attention in the central and western States because of the work of Glen Storr (see Wilson & Knowles, 1988, for references). In that time, however, the species of Queensland have not been as intensely studied.

For Queensland, Storr (1972) clarified the status of *L. muelleri* (Fischer) and Cogger (1975) noted 9 species of *Lerista* from the State. Greer (1979) described a new species *L. ameles* from NE Queensland and Cogger et al. (1983) listed the synonymies for all species. Greer et al. (1983) added three new species - *L. cinerea*, *L. storri* and *L. vittata* - from NW, NE and Central Queensland and Storr (1986) erected *L. aericeps aericeps* nov., from SW Queensland and the Northern Territory.

In 1988, Wilson & Knowles reviewed all Australian terrestrial reptiles and noted 15 species of *Lerista* from Queensland. However, in 1990, Greer said *L. aericeps aericeps* Storr was a junior synonym of *L. xanthura* Storr. Even so, Storr (1991a) was unconvinced and preferred to retain *L. aericeps* as a valid species. Storr (1991b) also disagreed with Greer's (1990) and Wilson & Knowles's (1988) concept of *L. orientalis* (de Vis); he divided the taxon into three allopatric species, two of which were new: *L. zonulata* and *L. ingrami*.

Recently, Covacevich & Couper (1991b) listed 17 species from Queensland and also provided maps (1991a) of 15 of the species that were represented in the Queensland Museum collection. In this paper, we add a further new species from NE and Central Queensland that has been

confused with *L. allanae* (Longman). We also re-appraise the status of the rare skink, *L. allanae*.

Measurements are in millimetres. Specimens prefixed by J are housed in the Queensland Museum, by R are in the Australian Museum. Queensland regions follow Ingram & Raven (1991).

***Lerista colliveri* sp.nov.**
(Figs 1-3)

Lerista allanae Wilson and Knowles, 1988: 291, photo no.523; Cogger, 1983, 1986: pl.672; Covacevich & Couper, 1991a: fig.305

MATERIAL EXAMINED

HOLOTYPE: J16181 Hughenden (20°51'S, 144°12'E), CQ, J. Devecchi.

PARATYPES: J33128 Battery Stn (19°26'S, 145°51'E), NEQ; J33123 Harvey Ra, Mingela (19°41'S, 146°20'E), NEQ, A. Taplin, Mar 1979; J33124 Fanning R Stn, c.1.5 km from hsd (19°44'S, 146°26'E), NEQ, K.R. McDonald, F. Parker, 1 Mar 1980; J33127 Fanning R Stn, 1.5km from hsd (19°44'S, 146°26'E), NEQ, K.R. McDonald, F. Parker, 1 Mar 1980; J46266-7 Mingela Ra, Fanning R Stn (19°44'S, 146°27'E), NEQ, K.R. McDonald, F. Parker, 1 Mar 1980; R62452 Red Falls at the Basalt Wall, 60km due WNW Charters Towers (19°56'S, 145°44'E), NEQ, E. Cameron, H. Cogger, A. Greer and P. Webber, 16 Jul 1977; R113515-39 area in and near Basalt Wall in vicinity of Reed Falls, Lolworth Ck, (19°56'S, 145°44'E) CQ, A.E. Greer, E.N. Arnold, D. Kent, R. Sadlier, G. Shea, 10-12 Sep 1984; J33125-6 Toomba Stn (19°58'S, 145°34'E), NEQ, B.C. Lawrie, D. Locke, 1 Jun 1981; J45648 Dun-

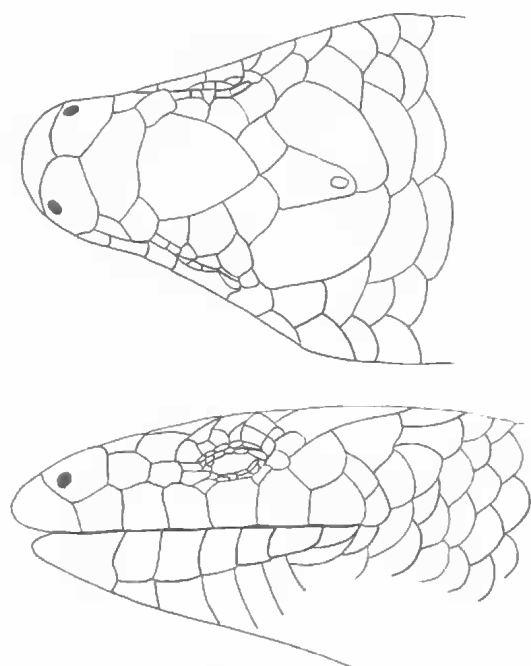


FIG. 1. *Lerista colliveri* (holotype J16181). Above: dorsal view of head. Below: lateral view of head.

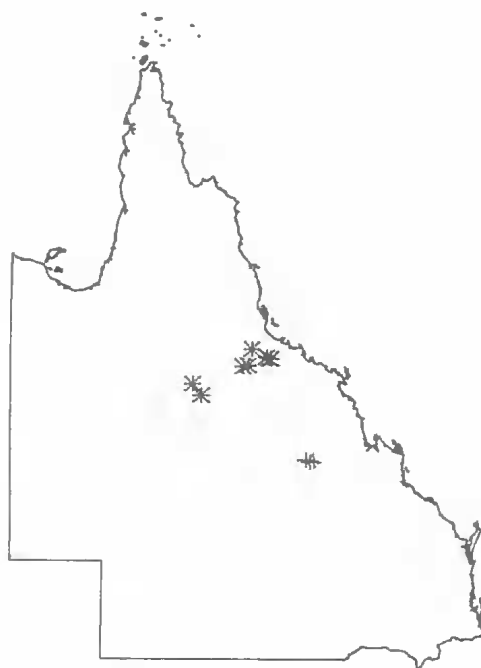


FIG. 2. Distribution of *Lerista colliveri* (*) and *L. allanae* (+).



FIG. 3. *Lerista colliveri* Red Falls, NEQ (Glenn Shea).

raven Stn, c.80km NW Hughenden at Stewart Ck (20°30'S, 143°55'E), CQ, A. Rozefelds and J. Covacevich, 7 Aug 1985; J16182-3 Hughenden (20°51'S, 144°12'E), CQ, J. Devecchi.

DIAGNOSIS

A large (maximum snout-vent length 84) *Lerista* with a movable eyelid; foreleg reduced and represented by a nubbin; and hindleg with one clawed digit. Most similar to *L. allanae* but distinguished by colour-pattern (continuous, dark, longitudinal lines dorsally and laterally; ventral scales with or without dark flecks vs longitudinal lines of dark spots dorsally and laterally; all ventral scales dark edged).

DESCRIPTION

Snout-vent length (mm): 41-84 (N 12, mean 67.4). Length of appendages etc. (% snout-vent length): hindleg 7-9 (N 12, mean 7.6), tail 111-127 (N 4, mean 118.5), head length 9-13 (N 12, mean 10.0), head width 6-8 (N 12, mean 6.7).

Nasals broadly in contact. Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals narrowly (N 7) to moderately (4) separated but sometimes touching (1). Usually 2 nuchals contacting the parietals, rarely 3 (N 12, mean 2.1). Supraoculars 3, first two in contact with the frontal. Supraciliaries 5 (N 28). Loreals 2, second smaller. Presuboculars 2, second the smaller. Supralabials 6, fourth below eye. Infralabials 6. Midbody scale rows 18 (N 28). Paravertebral scales 81-94 (N 13, mean 87.7). Foreleg almost absent, represented by a nubbin in a dimple. Hindleg with one clawed digit. Lamellae under longest toe 5-7 (N 12, mean 5.9).

Dorsal and lateral ground colour tan with a pattern of more or less continuous, dark, longitudinal lines; the lines are formed by individual scales having a dark central streak; on lower flanks the lines are broken into dark-edged scales. Ventral ground colour cream; chest and belly immaculate to well-marked with dark flecks; underside of tail boldly to obscurely patterned with longitudinal lines of dark flecks. Head shields dark-edged and mottled; lips barred; loreals and temporals marked by a dark streak breaking up posteriorly.

DISTRIBUTION

From just east of Townsville, NEQ, southwest to the Hughenden area, CQ.

ETYMOLOGY

Named for Mr Stanley Colliver OBE (1908-

1991) for his generosity and outstanding contributions to the Queensland Museum.

REMARKS

L. colliveri was included in *L. allanae* by Cogger (1983, 1985), Wilson & Knowles (1988) and Covacevich & Couper (1991a). The two species are similar. However, *L. colliveri* has distinct forelegs represented by nubbins while *L. allanae* has no protruding forelegs; they also differ in colour-pattern. The two species are separated by about 400km.

According to the criteria of status in Ingram & Raven (1991: 337), *L. colliveri* should be listed as '3K'.

Lerista allanae (Longman) (Figs 3-5)

Rhodona allanae Longman, 1937:167. Holotype J6180 from Retro Station, Capella, CQ.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

J12232 Clermont (22°50'S, 147°38'E), CQ, C. Vallis, Jan 1960; J6040, 6179-80, 6238, 6308, 6429-30 Retro

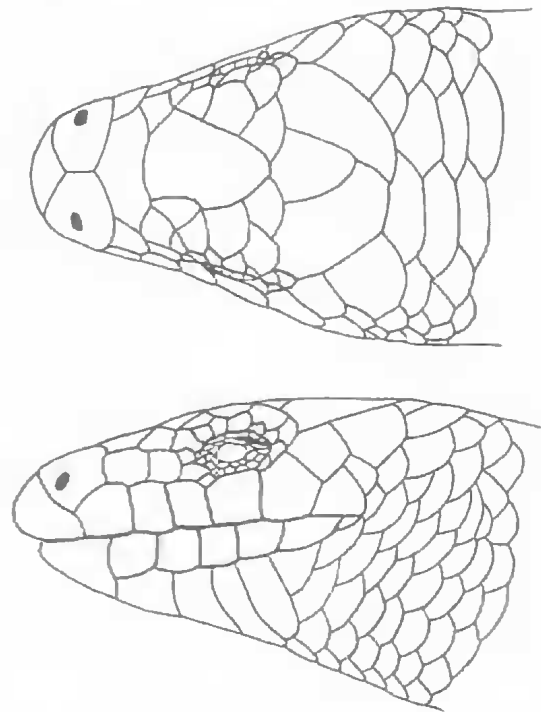


FIG. 4. *Lerista allanae* (holotype J6180). Above: dorsal view of head. Below: lateral view of head.



FIG. 5. *Lerista allanae* (holotype J6180) from Retro Station, Capella, CQ (Garry Cranitch).

Sta, Capella, via Clermont (22°52'S, 147°54'E), CQ, P.C. Allan; R13819 20 miles W of Capella (23°06'S, 147°43'E), CQ, J.R. Slevin, Aug 1929.

DIAGNOSIS

A large (maximum snout-vent length 88) *Lerista* with a movable eyelid; foreleg absent (usually represented by a shallow depression); and hindleg with one, clawed digit. See diagnosis of *L. colliveri* for further differences from that species.

DESCRIPTION

Snout-vent length (mm): 61-88 (N 7, mean 76.3). Length of appendages etc. (% snout-vent length): hindleg 6-10 (N 7, mean 7.7), tail 100-104 (N 2, mean 102), head length 9-10 (N 7, mean 9.0), head width 6-8 (N 7, mean 6.4).

Nasals broadly in contact. Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals narrowly (N 4) to moderately (2) separated but rarely touching (1). 2-4 nuchals contacting the parietals (N 7, mean 2.4). Supraoculars 3, first two in contact with the frontal. Supraciliaries 4 or 5 (N 8, mean 4.5). Loreals 2, second smaller. Presuboculars 2, second the smaller. Supralabials 6, fourth below eye. Infralabials 6. Midbody scale rows 18, rarely 20 (N 8, mean 18.3). Paravertebral scales 78-89 (N 7, mean 85.1). Foreleg absent, represented usually by a shallow depression. Hindleg with

one, clawed digit. Lamellae under longest toe 8-9 (N 8, mean 8.6).

Dorsal and lateral ground colour tan to gray-brown; back and flanks marked by longitudinal lines of dark spots. Ventral ground colour pale with chest and belly strongly marked by dark edged scales; dark edging particularly prominent under tail. Head shields dark-edged, obscure mottled; lips barred; loreals and temporals marked by dark streak breaking up posteriorly.

DISTRIBUTION

Between Clermont and Capella, CQ, within the area 22°50'-23°06'S and 147°38'-147°54'E.

REMARKS

Longman (1937) described *Rhodona allanae* from three specimens. He designated J6180 as holotype but left unwritten the registration numbers of the two paratypes. Covacevich (1971) said the paratypes were J6040 and J6238 and that J6308 was a questionable alternative to J6238. However, while there is no doubt about J6040, both the dates of registration of J6238 and J6308 (28 June 1937 and 30 November, 1937 respectively) are after the date of publication of Longman's paper (24 June 1937) and thus unlikely to have been examined for the paper. Actually, the second paratype must be J6179, which was registered with the holotype and is noted as 'paratype' in the register.

According to the criteria of status in Ingram & Raven (1991: 337), *L. allanae* should be listed as '2E'. McDonald et al. (1991) rated it as '3R'. However, they included specimens of *L. colliveri* in their concept of *L. allanae*. With *L. colliveri* removed, the species is only known from over a restricted range of about 60km and has been collected only in the years 1929 by J.R. Slevin (see Slevin, 1955), 1936-1938 by Mrs P.C. Allan (inferred from the same dates of registration in the Queensland Museum register) and 1960 by C. Vallis. In the last 25 years, despite intensive searching between Clermont and Capella by many collectors, *L. allanae* has not been found again.

L. allanae is apparently sympatric with two other *Lerista*: *L. punctatovittata* (J46739-41) has been taken from c.8-10km E of Capella at Gregory Mine turnoff (23°05'S, 148°06'E) and *L. fragilis* has been collected nearby (J6181-3, 6231 Retro Stn, Capella, via Clermont; J46742-3, 46746 c.8-10km E of Capella at Gregory Mine turnoff).

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